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BEFORE THE

3

NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS PUBLIC TRANSIT TASK FORCE

4

MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 3, 2013

5

MICHAEL A. BILANDIC BUILDING

160 North LaSalle Street

6

Chicago, Illinois

7

Met, pursuant to notice, at 1:00 p.m.

8

APPEARANCES:

9

GOVERNOR PATRICK QUINN, Chairman

ANN L. SCHNEIDER, Co-Chairperson/Secretary

10

GEORGE RANNEY, Co-Chairman

RAUL I. RAYMUNDO, Member

11

CAROLE L. BROWN, Member

PATRICK FITZGERALD, Member

12

DR. ASHISH SEN, Member, Member

DR. SYLVIA JENKINS, Member

13

ROBERT W. GUY, Member

KATHRYN THOLIN, Member

14

DR. ADRIENNE HOLLOWAY, Member

TONY PAULAUSKI, Member

15

NICK PALMER, Member

ROBERT G. REITER, Member

16

DONALD J. TANTILLO, Member

SONIA M. WALWYN, Member

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19

MIDWEST LITIGATION SERVICES, by

Patricia A. Armstrong, CSR, RPR

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Illinois CSR No. 84-1766

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2 GOVERNOR QUINN: I want to thank everyone
3 for joining us. This is the Northeastern
4 Illinois Public Transit Task Force, and I think
5 it's a very, very important organization and an
6 opportunity to do some important things for the
7 People of Illinois.

8 I want to thank each of the members
9 for their willingness to serve, their willingness
10 to come forward and volunteer for a very
11 important mission.

12 I think that is the essence of
13 public service in Illinois that men and women of
14 good faith and different places and different
15 backgrounds come together to address the serious
16 problem.

17 I do want to say at the very outset
18 the scandals that have been plaguing Metra and
19 its board of directors certainly have helped
20 bring us together here today, but I think also
21 more importantly we have an opportunity to take a
22 look at public transit in Northeastern Illinois
23 over the last four decades.

24 The RTA began by a referendum in

1 March of 1974. I voted for that. I think it was
2 a very important step forward, but it is an
3 opportunity I think for all of us to ask
4 questions of how well the Regional Transportation
5 Authority has been operating as well as its
6 constituent agencies, Metra and the CTA and PACE.
7 The men and women who live in our Northerneastern
8 Illinois, one of the largest parts of our
9 country, the most populated parts of our country
10 need excellent public transit in order to get to
11 work, get to school, to get to where they have to
12 go.

13 It's very important that we see our
14 mission here today as part of this Task Force
15 that we work together to advance their interests,
16 the interests of the commuters and the taxpayers.

17 No. 1, I think it's important to
18 realize that the system we are talking about, the
19 RTA system is the third largest public transit
20 system in the whole world, and it has to be I
21 think one that is the envy of the whole world.

22 So, we have had embarrassments in
23 recent times that underline the importance of
24 straightening things out, and that is why we have

1 the Task Force.

2 A few of the problems that I
3 personally have noticed and I think most
4 everybody who observes the public transit system,
5 particularly Metra, realize that there is a lack
6 of oversight, a lack of accountability and
7 inability to remove directors when needed.

8 There is a lack of ethical standards
9 that are applied. They are important for all of
10 us as taxpayers to make sure the public bodies
11 are adhered to, questionable compensation and
12 really in the case of Metra a complete paralysis
13 of governance.

14 And we have to address these issues
15 promptly on behalf of the public. Gridlock is
16 never good for anyone, especially everyday people
17 who depend on their government to deliver
18 something as important as transportation.

19 So I think in discussing this issue,
20 we should not only look at the current problems
21 and challenges but also look forward to what this
22 regional system ought to look like in the 21st
23 Century.

24 Should we have on board WiFi in all

1 of our buses and trains? Should we have a
2 universal fare card that makes it easier for
3 commuters. Should we have fuel-efficient buses
4 and trains in order to make sure that we are
5 sustainable?

6 These are all of the things that I
7 think all of us want to make sure are covered by
8 the Task Force, and we cannot in 2013 wait any
9 longer.

10 And so as Governor of our State when
11 I was looking at this situation over the summer,
12 I realized that our state and our taxpayers have
13 invested hundreds of millions of dollars in
14 public transit since I have been Governor,
15 specifically 1.8 billion dollars that have been
16 invested by the People of Illinois in public
17 transit in Northeastern Illinois in just the last
18 four years.

19 900 million dollars to the CTA,
20 including the largest project including the
21 Redline, the reconstruction of the Dan Ryan
22 Redline, that is 100 percent funded by the State,
23 425 million dollars.

24 We are rebuilding the south branch

1 and investing in stations on the north side of
2 Chicago with the CTA.

3 When the City has no money to do
4 this, the State is making these investments and
5 putting thousands of people to work, but we want
6 to have an efficient system, a 21st Century
7 system that helps all of our people get to work
8 and get to school.

9 The same way with Metra, 810 million
10 dollars has been invested by the taxpayers of
11 Illinois in the Metra system.

12 Our largest project was 160
13 Highliner cars from Metra Electric district. It
14 cost us 585 million dollars. These are 21st
15 Century rail cars on the south suburban area on
16 the south side of our City. Those electric cars
17 were very old, had no bathrooms. We are putting
18 in modern cars built in Illinois, assembled in
19 Illinois by Nippon Sharyo. The company has come
20 to our state to Rochelle, Illinois where I passed
21 by yesterday and is manufacturing rail cars for
22 the 21st Century.

23 That is what Metra is getting in
24 addition to other investments as well; and

1 finally with PACE, we are investing 90 million
2 dollars just in the last four years, in important
3 things, 91 compressed natural gas buses as well
4 as paratransit service that I believe in and I
5 put in our budget every year.

6 But I think it's important to kind
7 of take a step back. We have invested as well in
8 our Amtrak system, which is not just going from
9 town to town, but from city to city in our State
10 of Illinois; and just in the last seven years
11 going from Chicago to St. Louis where we are
12 currently building high speed rails. It's not
13 there yet. A portion of the route is high speed
14 rail at 110 miles an hour. We still have ways
15 to go on that. But despite that on our Amtrak
16 service to St. Louis we have added over the last
17 seven years 225 percent growth in ridership in
18 just that route.

19 The same way with Chicago to
20 Carbondale, that's 154 percent growth in our
21 Amtrak passenger route.

22 So there is something that we have
23 to ask ourselves. Why are our inter-city
24 passenger trains having such great growth and our

1 commuter trains here, whether they be CTA or
2 Metra, not having that kind of explosive growth.

3 To put it in perspective, I think
4 it's important to realize in the last seven years
5 the total ridership in this Northeastern Illinois
6 region has gone up 8.7, 8.7. The CTA bus, 4.9.
7 The CTA rail, 18.4. Metra is up 1.8, and PACE
8 ADA ridership is actually down.

9 So we have to really ask ourselves
10 if we want a strong economy, we have to have
11 excellent public transportation. It's important
12 for our economy. It's also important for our
13 environment. We have to be a sustainable
14 society.

15 So we really have to in the course
16 of this Task Force really examine the inside of
17 the whole system and ask questions that should be
18 asked, and that is why having public spirited
19 system citizens gather together over this next
20 few months to look at the system is exceptionally
21 important for all of the people of Illinois.

22 Right now there are 47 board members
23 in the public transit system in our State in
24 Northeastern Illinois. They are appointed by 16

1 different elected officials. Their compensation
2 ranges from \$50,000 to \$25,000 to \$15,000
3 depending on the board.

4 I think we have to ask questions
5 here about duplication, needed expenses, how many
6 boards do we will really need, how do we make
7 sure that there isn't wasteful compensation and
8 how do we turn this entire system into a world
9 class system that we can all be proud of that
10 doesn't have the kind of embarrassing scandals
11 that we are sick and tired of.

12 So, that is what the task is. That
13 is why I asked you to join us in this mission.
14 It's a very important public service mission. I
15 am grateful that everyone here is giving of their
16 time.

17 I think the essence of citizenship
18 is giving something back, and it's very important
19 that as you work together as a team to give ideas
20 to our legislature, to give us specific reforms
21 to our legislature that we can pass into law and
22 make the system the kind of world class system
23 that we all want for the 21st Century.

24 So, I wanted to say those words

1 today. I look forward to working with you. I
2 want to turn it over now to our Secretary of
3 Transportation, Ann Schneider. Take it from
4 there, Ann.

5 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Thank you,
6 Governor.

7 I do want to say that I really do
8 appreciate, and I think we should all recognize
9 the leadership that Governor Quinn has shown in
10 this initiative.

11 It is not just to address the
12 challenges that are facing us today when it comes
13 to Northeastern Illinois transit; but, as you
14 mentioned, it is how can we build a world class
15 transit system going forward and how can that fit
16 into a world class transportation system, and it
17 takes leadership to really have that kind of
18 foresight.

19 So, we are very fortunate that
20 Governor Quinn is where he is at today so that he
21 can form this group so that we can have our
22 deliberations and move this ball forward and
23 really do what is right for the region and do
24 what is right for the State.

1 I want to welcome all of the members
2 of the Northeastern Illinois Public Transit Task
3 Force for this kick-off meeting.

4 Again, the Governor is giving us an
5 opportunity to strengthen Northeastern Illinois'
6 Transit System and elevate it to the world class
7 status it deserves; and it does deserve that
8 world class status.

9 It is now our duty as task force
10 members to ensure that we take the time and put
11 in the effort to make recommendations to enhance
12 this vital public service in Illinois and that
13 Illinoisans that use this system everyday get the
14 best possible service.

15 Residents of this region have
16 undoubtedly become cynical about transit service
17 and its administration.

18 In addition, as the Governor
19 mentioned, that while other cities transit
20 ridership has grown robustly, the ridership in
21 Northeastern has been stagnant.

22 So Governor Quinn and the Department
23 of Transportation believe that reorganizing and
24 revitalizing the way transit is delivered could

1 start Northeastern Illinois down the path of
2 reversing that trend.

3 Our work here is critical, as
4 Illinois strives to improve and strengthen the
5 connections among all transportation modes,
6 including transit, to provide Illinois and the
7 nation with a seamless transportation system that
8 empowers our economy.

9 We want to make sure the system is
10 accessible, safe, respects the environment,
11 advances quality of life and provides equal
12 access to opportunity for all of the residents in
13 the region.

14 Northeastern Illinois residents and
15 visitors deserve a transit system that
16 efficiently meets public needs and holds
17 leadership accountable for system performance and
18 effectiveness through a transparent operating
19 system.

20 I really think this is an important
21 first step in this process, and we have a very
22 aggressive schedule ahead of us, which we will
23 discuss later on in the meeting.

24 I really do want to echo the

1 Governor's appreciation to all of the members
2 that have agreed to serve on the Task Force,
3 because this is a big moment in time for transit
4 here in Northeastern Illinois.

5 We do have the opportunity to really
6 make a difference. So I look forward to the
7 deliberations in the few weeks we have got coming
8 ahead of us, and I appreciate the opportunity to
9 be here.

10 I think with that I am going to pass
11 it off to the other co-chair, George Ranney, for
12 his opening statement.

13 CO-CHAIRMAN RANNEY: I think the Governor
14 and the secretary have framed the issue very
15 well. I would like to emphasize just three
16 points.

17 One of them is this: This issue is
18 urgent. If our region is to remain competitive
19 in the global economy, it has to fix this
20 problem, and it has to do it for the long term,
21 and we need to act now.

22 Every scandal -- and there have been
23 several as you know -- is an opportunity to
24 reform and improve. So this is our opportunity,

1 our time to reform mass transit.

2 Second, everything is on the table.
3 There have been a lot of ideas proposed in the
4 last few months, many of them by Metropolis, the
5 organization I head and others.

6 All ideas should receive serious
7 consideration and be deliberated by all of us on
8 the merits; but I think it's important for people
9 to understand that we need to start from way back
10 to get far ahead and so we need to consider
11 everything. The Governor talked about this
12 before, and I agreed with him.

13 I was part of the creation of the
14 RTA 40 years this year. I am honored to be able
15 to be part of the next transformation of mass
16 transit in this region.

17 For the last 14 years Metropolis'
18 strategies has been immersed in the policy work
19 here.

20 We have good teams of people, all of
21 whom are excited by the opportunity to
22 participate in this, and are happy to help.

23 Finally, I just want to reiterate in
24 1999 when this Commercial Club of Chicago put out

1 its report Chicago Metropolis 2020, it said this
2 region must have an excellent world class transit
3 system to get people to work. That remains the
4 case today.

5 It also said that the best way to
6 deal with congestion on the roads is by an
7 effective mass transit system.

8 We got to get at these things.
9 Secretary Schneider talked about the fact that
10 our ridership here has been stagnant since 1991.
11 You can look at the numbers, and you will see
12 that.

13 At the same time the ridership in
14 New York City has increased by over 50 percent.
15 We are getting left behind. That is no good for
16 any of us and for the future of this region.

17 The end result of our work here
18 should not simply be to fix the short term stuff
19 that we need to fix, but to do something long
20 term for the future of the region.

21 It has to be efficient. It has to
22 be cost-effective. It has to be clean. It has
23 to be reliable, and it should be managed with
24 integrity. It should be a hallmark of

1 innovation.

2 In short, we want a system that gets
3 more people where they want to go and when they
4 need to get there; and if we don't do that, we
5 are going to slide into a second class region,
6 and none of us want that. So now is the time.
7 Everything is on the table. We need a world
8 class transit system.

9 GOVERNOR QUINN: Well said, George.

10 I personally want to thank George on
11 behalf of everybody in Illinois. He has been a
12 public citizen for as long as I have known you,
13 George.

14 CO-CHAIRMAN RANNEY: Most of you remind me
15 that I've been around a long time.

16 GOVERNOR QUINN: You started with Noah, I
17 think; right? You helped him build a boat way
18 back when.

19 [Laughter.]

20 GOVERNOR QUINN: So, I really want to
21 thank George and Ann for their leadership on this
22 task force. They bring a great deal of integrity
23 and information and expertise. It's important to
24 have all the members participate.

1 But what George just said I think
2 bears repeating. This is urgent.

3 This is something that we have to
4 make sure everything is on the table to get full
5 scale reform; and finally, we want a world class
6 system. We want to be not a pretty good system.
7 We want to have an excellent system. So it takes
8 both thinking people who really understand that
9 we are moving forward in Illinois.

10 Someone who is on our task force
11 that I would like to have say a word or two is
12 our former U.S. Attorney for this Northern
13 District of Illinois, and that is Patrick
14 Fitzgerald.

15 Take it from there, Pat.

16 MR. FITZGERALD: Thank you, Governor; and
17 I will keep my remarks brief and not repeat what
18 the three prior speakers have said with which I
19 totally agree.

20 I think the one thing that I am
21 looking forward to is serving under George and
22 Ann's leadership with the team is to recognize
23 that commuters and the taxpayers have an awful
24 lot at stake.

1 joining us, Pat.

2 I know each member would like to say
3 perhaps some introductory remarks, and I do have
4 to move to another assignment.

5 But Dr. Sen, why don't you start as
6 a retired professor from the University of
7 Illinois in Chicago. We are real grateful to
8 have your participation.

9 DR. SEN: Thank you, Governor.

10 I would simply be echoing what the
11 others have said before me.

12 Transportation and economic
13 development are very very closely linked; and
14 when transportation goes down, economic
15 development goes down with it.

16 I have been in and around Chicago's
17 regions and transportation as a professor for 45
18 years. That is how old I am.

19 In fact, I was in some of the
20 meetings that was creating the structure
21 of the RTA in the second round, and I have grown
22 to love the system, and it is a tremendous
23 opportunity for me to participate in this group;
24 and I look forward to working with my colleagues

1 in the group, and I promise to work as hard as I
2 can. Thank you.

3 GOVERNOR QUINN: Dr. Jenkins.

4 DR. JENKINS: Good afternoon.

5 First I want to apologize for being
6 a few minutes late. The transportation from the
7 south side suburbs is not the best.

8 [Laughter.]

9 DR. JENKINS: I have served as President
10 of Moraine Valley Community College, and I am
11 very pleased and honored to have been asked to
12 serve on this Commission.

13 I represent 400,000 residents in 26
14 communities in the southwest suburbs of Cook
15 County, and our students rely very heavily on
16 public transportation, especially to our off
17 campus sites in Blue Island and Tinley Park and
18 so I am very happy to be here to offer any
19 recommendations that I can. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Bob.

21 MR. GUY: Hello. I am Bob Guy, United
22 Transportation Union.

23 I want to stress how honored I am to
24 serve on this panel, and I look forward to

1 working with the fellow Task Force members in an
2 effort to see what we can do and look to the
3 future and the betterment of mass transit as a
4 whole in this region, not only for the passengers
5 and the taxpayers but for the employees, the
6 career professionals, who go out there day in and
7 day out and provide the valuable service that we
8 hope to expand on.

9 I also want to thank Governor Quinn
10 for this opportunity. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Kathy.

12 MS. THOLIN: Hi. I am Kathy Tholin. I
13 direct the Center for Neighborhood Technology,
14 which for 35 years has worked to help contribute
15 to creating a sustainable and economic vibrant
16 region, and I truly appreciate the framework and
17 the challenge that has been given to us, because
18 transit is absolutely critical to the economic
19 health and the environment sustainability of our
20 region.

21 I would hope -- just a couple of
22 thoughts -- that we really think about this
23 question about what is a world class transit
24 system for our region and start our work by

1 thinking about what that looks like and defining
2 what a good performance is because we all know
3 that we want to improve transit in the region,
4 and I hope that we will be able to look outside
5 of our region for some of the best practitioners
6 in the country as well.

7 I am really looking forward to
8 working on this committee and appreciate the
9 charge that we have been given to do that.

10 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Adrienne.

11 DR. HOLLOWAY: Hi. I am Adrienne
12 Holloway. I am professor at DePaul University
13 School of Public Service down in the loop.

14 I just want to thank Governor Quinn
15 for the opportunity to be on the task force and
16 represent not only students and their view and
17 role in being commuters to their respective
18 institutions but also representing the far
19 western suburbs and some of the benefits and
20 sometimes the obstacles that we have to deal with
21 in trying to navigate ourselves throughout the
22 suburban area as well as moving into the urban
23 core.

24 I think what I would like to just

1 underscore, if not echo, is that sometimes
2 through challenges we have to recognize the
3 opportunities that are presented as a result; and
4 I think this is really an opportunity for us to
5 be innovative and not be mired by the politics
6 and the controversy that is surrounding the Task
7 Force right now, but look at ways in which we can
8 take this charge and move us forward into looking
9 at what can be this world class rail system that
10 has been mentioned by my colleagues definitely
11 linked toward making us a world class city. So,
12 it's not just a transit factor. It's also what
13 we want Chicago to be. Thank you for this
14 opportunity.

15 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Thank you.

16 Don, why don't you go next?

17 MR. TANTILLO: My name is Don Tantillo. I
18 am a retired teacher. I guess I am representing
19 the people of McHenry. I hope I do a good job.

20 I used public transportation to get
21 here today, and it was wonderful as usual. I
22 look forward to working with these people and
23 this committee.

24 I would just repeat everything that

1 has been said, because it represents where I am
2 coming from; and I hope my background in critical
3 thinking and group problem solving will be of
4 some help to you.

5 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Nick.

6 MR. PALMER: Hello. I am Nick Palmer,
7 Chief of Staff for the Will County Executive.

8 Will County is one of the fastest
9 growing counties in the State. It grew 175,000
10 people between 2000 and 2010 and is expected to
11 be 1.3 million by 2030. So transit is very
12 important to Will County.

13 Approximately 60 percent of our
14 residents leave the county for work everyday, and
15 they are going to places like DuPage, Suburban
16 Cook and the City of Chicago.

17 As that growth continues, transit is
18 going to be a huge critical function. Otherwise,
19 they will all be stuck on 55 and 57 and every
20 other roadway into the city and surrounding
21 areas.

22 I agree with all of my colleagues
23 that having a system that is effective and is
24 sufficient and there is confidence in it is

1 critical to our work here.

2 It's an honor to be part of such a
3 distinguished group of people. I look forward to
4 working with all of you, and I am not here just
5 representing Will County.

6 I think we ought to look at the
7 region as a whole, because it does function. The
8 amount of our workers that come into the city or
9 surrounding areas is important to everybody and
10 visa-versa.

11 If there is opportunities in
12 suburban areas, we get workers out of the city to
13 those places, too. This is important work. I
14 look forward to being part of it. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Nick.
16 Tony.

17 MR. PAULASKI: I am Tony Paulaski,
18 Executive Director of the Arc of Illinois.

19 We are a public policy organization
20 that represents people with intellectual and
21 other developmental disabilities.

22 For those folks, public
23 transportation can mean whether they live in the
24 community, are employed, every aspect of their

1 life is controlled by public transportation.

2 We introduced most of the disability
3 and special education legislation in Illinois.
4 So we bring to this table some knowledge of the
5 legislative process.

6 In part of my work I had the
7 occasion to be the Chairman of the PACE Blue
8 Ribbon Committee, which designed the paratransit
9 system here in Northeastern Illinois a couple of
10 years ago.

11 We took a system that was extremely
12 controversial and nobody was happy with. We put
13 the CTA paratransit under the leadership of PACE
14 and redesigned that system, and we have seen much
15 success and great satisfaction with that
16 transition.

17 I am also bringing to the table 40
18 years of working with boards. So I know the
19 differences between policy and what staff need to
20 do and the ethics as Patrick talked about the
21 importance of that in what we do here.

22 I am humbled and honored to be
23 appointed to this task force by Governor Quinn.
24 Thank you.

1 GOVERNOR QUINN: Bob Reiter.

2 MR. REITER: My name is Bob Reiter. I am
3 secretary-treasurer of the Chicago Federation of
4 Labor.

5 The CFO represents over 300 local
6 unions that in turn represent over half a million
7 working men and women here in the Chicago and
8 Cook county area.

9 I want to thank Governor Quinn for
10 giving me the opportunity to serve on this
11 important Task Force and giving working men and
12 women a voice on this important issue.

13 I also want to thank George Ranney
14 and Ann Schneider specifically for all the work
15 that she does at IDOT.

16 What I am hoping we do here today
17 and in the coming days and weeks and months is
18 continue to support a strong robust
19 transportation system for the region that, as
20 Mr. Guy alluded to, not only serves the men and
21 women who work for the affiliated agencies
22 underneath the RTA, but for the working men and
23 women who use the system to earn a living for
24 their families.

1 Our transportation system here in
2 Northeast Illinois is an important piece of our
3 economy. It attracts businesses, and it attracts
4 talented workers.

5 So, again, I want to thank Governor
6 Quinn for allowing me to serve on this task
7 force.

8 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Thanks, Bob.
9 Raul.

10 MR. RAYMUNDO: Good afternoon. I am Raul
11 Raymundo. I am director of the community
12 development corporation called the resurrection
13 project. We do a lot of community economic
14 development projects on the West side of the City
15 and in the western suburbs.

16 I work with people daily who have to
17 use the public transportation systems to get to
18 work and home, and there really are four things
19 that they always tell me that they would like to
20 see improve.

21 I am looking forward for
22 participating on this committee and see what we
23 can accomplish.

24 At the end of the day the system has

1 to be safe. The system has to be affordable.
2 The system has to be efficient and effective and
3 also figure out ways to reducing the commuter
4 times so that people can get to work on time and
5 back to home on time.

6 So, hopefully this task force can
7 address all of those areas for working men and
8 women in the region. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Carole.

10 MS. BROWN: Thank you. My name is Carole
11 Brown, and I am an investment banker at
12 Barclays.

13 Most of you know that I for
14 six-and-a-half years chaired the Chicago Transit
15 Authority and have also served on the RTA for two
16 terms and so those of you who know me know that I
17 have very strong views about transit that I don't
18 feel like I need to go into right now.

19 I look forward to working on this
20 most important issue, and I thank you Chairman
21 Ranney and Chairman Schneider for their
22 leadership and also the Governor for convening
23 it; and I look forward to working with my fellow
24 Illinois board members.

1 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: I have some
2 housekeeping items that I want to go over with
3 the task force members here real quickly; but
4 before I do, I also want to recognize we have
5 State Representative Al Riley in the audience. I
6 know that he is very interested in transit reform
7 in the region, so we are glad that he has been
8 able to join us today.

9 First for the task force members
10 because we want to make sure that our
11 deliberations are very public and transparent, we
12 do have a court reporter that is recording
13 today's minutes and conversations. So I need you
14 to be aware of that.

15 Also, for the people in the
16 audience, we have public comments cards, and I
17 think we have a public comment box. You can drop
18 those cards into it.

19 You can either offer to provide
20 testimony later on in the agenda or you could
21 take and just provide written comments to us and
22 we will compile that information to make sure
23 that all members of the task force has access to
24 it.

1 We also have for the public set up a
2 web site for this task force, and we have some
3 palm cards. If you don't have one, you probably
4 catch one on your way out.

5 For members of the Task Force, we
6 have given you a couple sets of these palm cards
7 just so you know what the website is, and this is
8 a public facing website that will provide
9 information on the work that we are doing.

10 Also we have a photographer that
11 will be taking pictures throughout our
12 deliberations. We see this as an historic moment
13 in time. We want to make sure that we capture
14 that adequately.

15 Then also for the task force members
16 you have something at your place that is an
17 eight-and-a-half by 11 sheet, and it talks about
18 how you can get access to the share point site
19 and just for the members of the task force, that
20 share point site is going to be a repository of
21 documents including any type of materials that
22 you think are important for our deliberations.

23 We are going to make sure that
24 anything that is requested is loaded up onto that

1 particular share point site, and this is giving
2 you instructions on how to access that. I just
3 wanted to make sure that we also pointed that out
4 as well.

5 So, as the Governor mentioned and as
6 everybody here I think, we have a common purpose.
7 We want to make this a world class system.

8 Really our deliberations have to be
9 very global in thinking. There are immediate
10 needs that need to be addressed, which I think
11 are contemplated in the time line that the
12 Governor laid out for us in the Executive Order.

13 October 18th our first report will
14 be due to the Governor which should contain
15 recommendations that he could carry forward into
16 the legislative process during the fall veto
17 session, and then we have a final report due
18 on January 31st, and it's contemplated that the
19 recommendations made in that report then would be
20 offered up through the legislative process during
21 the spring legislative session.

22 So, we have a very aggressive time
23 line; but before we go into any greater detail on
24 that, I did also want to mention that a number of

1 materials have been provided.

2 I think we sent out an e-mail to all
3 of the members of the task force with a great
4 deal of background information. I think it was
5 like a 188-page document, which seems a little
6 daunting.

7 It is broken up into some various
8 neat little categories, and what I would ask is
9 that at some point if you see that you need
10 additional information beyond what has already
11 been provided to please let us know. You can let
12 me know or you can let George know, and we will
13 make sure that the research is done so that we
14 provide that information.

15 I know that in our phone calls that
16 we had last week many of you talked about the
17 fact that you really wanted to see what other
18 transit systems looked like and what high
19 functioning transit systems, how they were
20 structured and what their performance was. So we
21 are going to be gathering that information and
22 providing that information to you as we go
23 forward.

24 I think there is also a request to

1 get a better understanding of the bonding
2 authority related to Northeastern Illinois
3 Transit, and we do have folks that are at the
4 Governor's office of management and budget for
5 the Governor that are working on that, and we
6 will talk about that in a little bit.

7 I just wanted to provide that
8 information and the background materials, and I
9 think I jumped ahead of myself a little bit.

10 I talked about the time line and the
11 reporting requirements. I am trying to go
12 through some of these housekeeping items pretty
13 quickly, but we do have a lot of work to do as we
14 go forward, and there are portions of the agenda
15 where I think it is really important for us to
16 get a good dialogue going and good public comment
17 and feedback towards the end of the agenda as
18 well.

19 So the time line, as I mentioned, we
20 have a very aggressive time line; and I think as
21 we go forward and talk about the structure of the
22 Task Force, which is where I am hoping that we
23 can have a really good conversation today, I
24 think it's going to become apparent that some of

1 the short-term things that we really need to be
2 looking at are going to focus around the areas
3 that Patrick Fitzgerald talked about when it
4 comes to ethics and ethics reform; but as George
5 mentioned, we can't look at this as just taking
6 care of the immediate issues at hand, but also we
7 need to look at this as an opportunity to make
8 more long lasting changes and recommendations for
9 changes to the system so that it can be a truly
10 fully functioning world class 21st Century
11 transit system.

12 So with that, I would like to get
13 into what I say is part of the meat of what we
14 are going to talk about today.

15 As we move forward, we are going to
16 determine how we are going to conduct our
17 business and so I think it's important for us to
18 start the conversation about what that should
19 look like.

20 I am going to ask George to talk
21 about the four areas that we wanted to really try
22 to develop some working groups around and focus.

23 CO-CHAIRMAN RANNEY: What we have been
24 thinking is that it would make sense to try to

1 split up some of the work in the areas that we
2 thought were critically important and get at
3 several of them sooner rather than waiting for
4 all of them to happen all at once.

5 Obviously the whole issue of ethics
6 is on people's minds and there are issues that I
7 know and others of this task force have already
8 asked questions about, how are we going to
9 operate the system. We do need to think about
10 that.

11 There is a whole issue of what is
12 the long-term for the world class system.
13 Finding that and making sure that we have a
14 consensus I would say in this group on what that
15 means, that probably is going to be something
16 that will consume us not only in the beginning,
17 and I heard the idea of bringing some people to
18 help us understand that; but it will take us to
19 the very end. So we need to I think highlight
20 that.

21 The third issue is the issue of
22 finance. We have some variable expertise thanks
23 to the Governor's Task Force.

24 We need to understand that issue

1 well, because it will determine whether we really
2 can live up to our aspirations of a world class
3 system.

4 And then finally there is the issue,
5 one of the two key issues obviously for any such
6 transit system, the issue of governance.

7 I am thinking about that. We need
8 to start thinking about that now. It will become
9 much clearer as we go ahead if we think about the
10 issue of a world class system. We think about
11 the issue of how do we finance it. We think
12 about the issue of ethics as well, and it will be
13 much easier to get a real idea on the governance
14 issue in the process as we go ahead.

15 So, I jumped ahead by suggesting
16 these four issues, not only in terms of
17 substance, how do we implement it, but the
18 question of sequencing and timing.

19 Obviously the first two of these we
20 got to get at very promptly to resolve these
21 issues if we are to achieve a world class system.
22 I hope that is helpful.

23 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: It does.

24 To that end I think I would like to

1 open it up to discussion of the task force
2 members; but before I do, for each of these four
3 areas we have developed a sign-up sheet.

4 So what we are looking for is to
5 form some working groups around each four areas,
6 and we are looking for someone that is willing to
7 serve as a co-chair.

8 Now, don't feel like you are going
9 to be out there alone if you do that.

10 We will provide staff for each of
11 the four working groups so that you will have
12 staff support, and what we are hoping then is
13 that once we get these back and we see where your
14 interests lie and who is interested in serving as
15 co-chairs, we would then be forming those work
16 groups and then getting back with the co-chair of
17 those work groups to get the work plan put
18 together to address these issues as we go
19 forward, and we want to do so on some of these
20 issues on a little bit faster track than we do on
21 some of the other issues where we want to be more
22 contemplative of what the issues are.

23 So, I am going to go ahead and pass
24 these around. Just sign your name and whether or

1 not you are interested in chairing that work
2 group so we get a better sense of who is
3 interested in what, and I think at that point
4 then we will be able to have more detailed
5 discussions within the work groups and then the
6 work groups can report up to the full task force
7 and then we can build recommendations off of the
8 work that is done.

9 So, I am going to pass these around;
10 but at the same time, I would like to open it up
11 for any comments from the task force.

12 Carole has her hand up.

13 MS. BROWN: I have more of a question
14 around the four major areas that you identified
15 and the question being around the scope of the
16 governance question and what is that scope?

17 So, are we talking about just kind
18 of oversight or are we actually talking about
19 operations which is different, because the
20 current structure that we have is everyone is the
21 governance and oversight is a financial and
22 budgetary oversight.

23 But it doesn't go into the operating
24 of the service boards and so as we start talking

1 about this, what is the scope of what we are
2 looking at?

3 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: In terms of the
4 governance, I don't think we want to take
5 anything off the table.

6 We want to leave it broadly defined
7 at this point, and that might be something as
8 that work group goes forward, that we might
9 refine further.

10 Clearly, I think the budgetary and
11 financial oversight is going to be an important
12 part of that. I mean, we could get down into the
13 operational.

14 I don't see it being terribly
15 detailed, but we still don't want to shut the
16 door to that potential.

17 CO-CHAIRMAN RANNEY: Let me add to that.

18 I think your comment suggested the
19 appropriateness of doing those somewhat
20 sequentially.

21 We will have a much better idea of
22 the scale of what we want to get into when we
23 have a better sense of what we are really aiming
24 at in terms of world class systems.

1 MS. BROWN: I guess really my comment is
2 more along the timetable that Secretary Schneider
3 laid out and the complexity of the issue, and I
4 made a joke in the back saying that government
5 tends to overcorrect; and what I wouldn't think
6 we would want to do is come with a set of
7 recommendations in this short time frame not
8 understanding the implications of that on the
9 system and the operations of the system itself.

10 In defining our scope, if we know
11 what kind of our scope is and what we think is
12 the appropriate scope, we won't do that and so
13 that is kind of where we are at.

14 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: I think that's a
15 very good point.

16 I think in the short term we are
17 going to be looking for some of the things where
18 we think an immediate fix might be necessary and
19 then for the governance piece be a more longer
20 term so that we do anticipate what impacts it may
21 have.

22 MS. BROWN: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Any other comments
24 or clarifications?

1 DR. JENKINS: We only have two.

2 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: I sent two that
3 way and two that way. You will see them
4 eventually.

5 DR. JENKINS: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Any other comments
7 from any of the task force members? Don't be
8 shy. We have a very heavy workload going
9 forward.

10 Just so you know for the work
11 groups, too, I think part of the working plan is
12 going to be to do a swat analysis. That's where
13 we look at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities
14 and so that is going to be part of that working
15 group task.

16 And I think that will also help us
17 as we go forward in our deliberations to really
18 start formulating some recommendations around
19 each of those subject matter areas, but I think
20 the ethics area is probably something, as George
21 mentioned, we will have to do in the near term.

22 In the longer term we would be
23 looking at system performance and also looking at
24 finance, which are two heavy issues and I think

1 governance in the fall and to both the short and
2 long term.

3 We just have to, as we move forward
4 with those working groups, have a better
5 understanding of how we can melt those together.

6 George.

7 CO-CHAIRMAN RANNEY: Let me make a comment
8 on the sign-up sheets.

9 Obviously we don't know what
10 responses we are going to get.

11 We are going to spend some time
12 talking with each of you about where you can help
13 the most. This is not meant to be definitive in
14 any way, and it will be followed up.

15 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: That is right.

16 I didn't realize the time is moving
17 and quite quickly.

18 So with that, we will move to the
19 next item on the agenda, which is the
20 solicitation of public comments in public
21 hearings.

22 We received communications that we
23 included in your packet, and I think those
24 communications included one from Congressman

1 Lipinski who strongly recommended that the Task
2 Force have some public hearings.

3 I would like to leave that open to
4 the task force members for discussion. I want to
5 really point out a couple of different things.

6 First, all of the deliberations of
7 the task force are subject to the Open Meetings
8 Act, and our plan right now is to provide a time
9 period at the end of each of the task force
10 meetings for public comment. So there will be
11 opportunities at the regular task force meetings
12 for public comment.

13 Also, as I mentioned, we are going
14 to a website, and we are going to be setting up a
15 way for the public to offer written comment via
16 the website. We had hoped to have that up and
17 running here today, but we were unable due to
18 some technical difficulties we had with that.
19 So, we weren't able to get that established, but
20 we will certainly share all of the public
21 comments with every member of the task force so
22 that you can have that for background materials
23 and understanding what we need to do going
24 forward, but I put it out to you as the task

1 force members whether or not you think it would
2 be appropriate for the task force to conduct just
3 listening sessions where we hold public hearings
4 and just open it up to the public. Not all of
5 the members of the task force, but try to split
6 us up a little bit so that we can have a couple
7 three or four, however many you think is the
8 appropriate number of public hearings in which we
9 can take public comments.

10 So are there any thoughts or
11 suggestions as it relates to that?

12 MR. RAYMUNDO: I think there ought to be
13 at least some and perhaps in other settings,
14 meaning not just downtown where folks can get to
15 to be able to express themselves.

16 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: So if you have
17 specific recommendations and if you don't, don't
18 worry about it. We will get back to you and talk
19 to you about what that might look like. Of
20 course, we will provide adequate notice to the
21 public so that they have the opportunity to
22 attend and provide input.

23 MR. RAYMUNDO: Because the region is very
24 broad, we ought to look at maybe two or three

1 areas of the region where we can get public
2 comment given the time constraints we have.

3 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Very good.

4 Any recommendations? What we will
5 do is we will put together then a proposed
6 schedule for that, and we will pass it around.

7 Adrienne.

8 DR. HOLLOWAY: I just wanted to kind of
9 make sure that if we want to operate within the
10 committee structure and hold public comments so
11 that there is an opportunity of members to engage
12 with the public members who are sharing their
13 viewpoint, that at least there is representation
14 of all the committees in each of the sessions so
15 that information can be brought back into the
16 working groups.

17 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: I think that's an
18 excellent point. We will make sure that that is
19 also part of the process as we go forward. We
20 will also be providing a court reporter at those
21 deliberations as well so that we can be sure we
22 are capturing all of the public comments and make
23 it available through our portal for everybody to
24 be able to see what those public comments were,

1 but I think it is important to make sure that we
2 do have full representation of the four working
3 groups at each session.

4 MR. REITER: I would just suggest that we
5 make sure that we do some of the ground work with
6 the working groups before we endeavor to do those
7 meetings so that way we are bringing some
8 knowledge to the table so that there we can maybe
9 help identify some of the issues at the onset.

10 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: That is also a
11 very good point.

12 So, we might look at a couple weeks
13 maybe before we start setting the first public
14 hearing.

15 There is no other comments?

16 Yes, Tony.

17 MR. PAULAUSKI: I think I take a little
18 different perspective in the group.

19 We have a very aggressive time line
20 here, and I imagine this looks like a pretty busy
21 group of people outside of the task force as
22 well.

23 I like the idea of having the public
24 comments at the end of the hearings. I think

1 that's a good forum for that.

2 I think you have the expertise in
3 this room and with the staff. I am big on public
4 hearings, but I am looking at the time frame we
5 are involved with.

6 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: That's good.

7 Any other comments along those
8 lines?

9 MR. FITZGERALD: I was just going to add I
10 would suggest if we would have some guidance on
11 the Open Meetings Act folks so we don't
12 inadvertently trip over it given the size of the
13 committee and the working groups that have a
14 quorum.

15 We don't want to find ourselves
16 uncertain about whether we can pick up the phone
17 and call a colleague to bounce a question off of
18 them.

19 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Excellent point.

20 So my Counsel, Mike Forti, who is
21 serving at the Open Meeting Act's expert and
22 ethnics officer for the Task Force will prepare
23 some notes and share with the entire group. We
24 have looked very closely at the Open Meetings

1 Act. So, I think that is a very good point.

2 We can pass around some comments and
3 some suggestions as it relates to that. I do
4 know that having talked to each of you
5 individually on Friday, I found out that was not
6 subject to the Open Meetings Act.

7 Just for the public's sake, it was
8 an introductory phone call just so I can
9 introduce myself.

10 George.

11 CO-CHAIRMAN RANNEY: Tony, I think your
12 comments were evermore. Whose time table is it?
13 It's really tough. I think it is amazing that we
14 have as many people here today as we do.

15 You are going to have to have
16 several meetings as a full group, and that is
17 where the hard work is going to be done.

18 So, I think as we go forward, the
19 people need to understand that the amount of time
20 we devote to public hearings is going to have to
21 be very well-managed, and I think this group
22 quickly, I think we need to understand not
23 everybody in the Task Force will be able to
24 necessarily hold these meetings, and I think we

1 also want to encourage people to file documents
2 in writing on the website so that we can
3 communicate those to everybody.

4 So I would ask people to understand
5 the challenge of the time frame that we have been
6 given as we work our way through this situation.

7 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: So we will prepare
8 a recommendation and e-mail it to each of the
9 members of the Task Force and then if we get your
10 comment and feedback, then we will set a
11 schedule.

12 And hopefully that will address some
13 of the issues that were raised here this
14 afternoon.

15 The other thing on the item, which
16 is more of a housekeeping item is our staffing
17 support.

18 I did mention that IDOT will be
19 providing staffing support. I am not going to
20 mention any names, but the chief operating
21 officer will be leading this internal working
22 group for IDOT staffers, and the IDOT staffers
23 will also be assigned to each of the sub groups
24 or working groups and then we also have folks

1 from the Governor's office of management and
2 budget that have been assigned to assist with
3 this task, and Jerry Stermer, who is director
4 there who is here in the audience is part of that
5 team; and Shiela Henrietta who is their counsel
6 and John Sinsheimer, who is the bond expert for
7 the State of Illinois and then Ben Winnick -- and
8 I don't see Ben anywhere, but Ben who does
9 a lot of things for GOMB, one of which is
10 legislative affairs.

11 At the end when we prepare
12 recommendations and they are going to have to be
13 somehow translated into legislation.

14 So, it's important that we have
15 these legislative affairs people involved in what
16 we are doing as well.

17 I know that we also have one from
18 IDOT that will be involved and her team. And
19 then I know George has some people from
20 Metropolis Strategies that are willing to offer
21 support as well.

22 Do you want to mention who they are?
23 George.

24 CO-CHAIRMAN RANNEY: I won't give all of

1 their names, but I would just mention that we
2 have a half dozen people, many of whom have been
3 working on this issue since 1999.

4 We see this as an opportunity for
5 them to provide us material to the Governor's
6 office, as well as taking a supporting role from
7 their experience and moving forward with that.

8 So the structure of this Task Force
9 is something we discussed with the Governor, the
10 staff, public people, public officials and
11 private working hand in hand with the co-chairman
12 arrangement, as well as what we are doing on the
13 staffing as well.

14 So feel free to be in touch through
15 the channels. We expect to see people from both
16 sides of the street moving forward here.

17 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: The next item is
18 to schedule the next meeting.

19 We will try to get the working
20 groups set up and out obviously as quickly as
21 possible.

22 I would like to do that in the next
23 couple of days and then we will be in contact
24 whatever the chair or co-chair are of those

1 working groups as well and see if we can put
2 together a time line for each of them.

3 What I would strongly suggest given
4 the short time line to October, our first
5 deadline October 18th that we try to meet -- and
6 I hate to say this, because I know we are all
7 very busy, but I think we need to have some sort
8 of hookup at least once a week or maybe once
9 every 10 days, but certainly we want to make sure
10 that we are being able -- that we have enough
11 time to make a considered discussion around the
12 things that the working groups were providing to
13 us.

14 I think it's really important to us
15 to start really formulating those short term
16 recommendations as quickly as possible so some of
17 those working groups I think are going to have a
18 tremendous task in front of them in the near
19 term.

20 They are going to have a tremendous
21 task as we go forward, but I think ethics
22 obviously is one of those areas that we want to
23 get some quick turn-around on.

24 So any comments about the meetings,

1 scheduling or time line?

2 What I will do is have my assistant
3 working with George's assistant, and we will try
4 to be as sensitive as we can to all of your
5 schedules as we schedule these meetings going
6 forward.

7 But I think the work is so
8 important, and I do appreciate the time that you
9 were offering of that time to this task and so we
10 will try to be sensitive to your needs, but we
11 are going to be very aggressive going forward.

12 So absent any additional input from
13 the Committee, what I would like to do at this
14 point is open it up for public comment.

15 It is 2:00 o'clock, and we have
16 three that have asked to provide public comment
17 at this point.

18 So what I would like to do is call
19 each of the three up, and we were going to give
20 you three minutes to give your public testimony,
21 but I also want to make sure that we are
22 capturing everything that you want to say.

23 So I think Representative Riley, you
24 would like to provide comment.

1 REPRESENTATIVE RILEY: Good afternoon.

2 It's really good to be here, Chairman Schnieder,
3 Co-Chairman Ranney. Three minutes, you know I
4 need more than three minutes.

5 Let me just simply say that a lot of
6 problems got us here. A lot of what we thought
7 was good planning in the past got us to where we
8 are right now.

9 The only thing that I would say is
10 that whatever you do, think about the riding
11 public.

12 I think many times the riding public
13 is the lost person. We will talk planning. We
14 will talk about different transportation models.
15 We will talk about all of that kind of stuff.

16 But we don't talk about other people
17 who ride the trains, ride the buses. These are
18 the people that I see everyday. We talked about
19 the dearth of transit in the southwest suburbs.
20 Let's talk about the south suburbs, too.

21 A large group of people who have the
22 longest times to work in the entire region and
23 the longest times to work is a proxy for there is
24 not a lot of business and industry out there. So

1 they have to go other places.

2 Anthony Downes a long time ago
3 coined a phrase talking about benign neglect, and
4 that is what many of my constituents see when it
5 comes to the south suburbs, benign neglect. We
6 don't talk about the Redline extension to 130th
7 Street. We don't talk about a whole lot of other
8 things.

9 So one of the problems that I have
10 always had was things like maintaining rolling
11 stock in a state of good repair, which is a
12 euphemism for we just don't give a dam about you
13 and your region.

14 Whether that is real, whether that
15 is contrived, a lot of people think that.

16 So, I think that we have a great
17 opportunity going forward to really make this
18 transit system a world class system. We always
19 have to think about equity, equity in funding and
20 equity in policy being sure that all of the
21 regions get their fair share. These are all
22 residents. They are all the riding public and so
23 I will be there with you from the legislature. I
24 will be there with you to be sure that this job

1 is done the way I think you want it to be done.

2 In closing, let me just say this:

3 You have a daunting task, of course. I have
4 heard it said many times today that we have an
5 aggressive agenda. Okay. It's aggressive.

6 Wherever you come from you have
7 aggressive agendas. We in Springfield have an
8 aggressive agenda. Don't let that be a euphemism
9 for we are really not going to take this to the
10 public.

11 I had a bill this year in the
12 legislature that dealt with a service board not
13 taking their policy development to the public.
14 Let's be sure that that doesn't happen. You can
15 still involve people. It's all kinds of groups
16 and all kinds of folks that can be a part of this
17 process, and I hope that we do that.

18 Thank you so much. You do have a
19 daunting job; and, again, I am here to help in
20 any way that I can. I thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Thank you.

22 Mary Fitzgerald.

23 MS. FITZGERALD: Good afternoon. Thank
24 you for your service. My name is Mary

1 Fitzgerald, no relation, as far as I know.

2 [Laughter.]

3 MS. FITZGERALD: I am a 27-year resident
4 of DuPage County. On August 1st, the day after
5 the DuPage member of the Metra Board resigned, I
6 sent a letter and resume to the Dupage County
7 Board Chairman asking to be considered for the
8 DuPage Metra board position.

9 I am currently an elected member of
10 the Glenbard High School District 87 DuPage
11 School Board, the third largest school district
12 in the State of Illinois.

13 During my two years on the Board we
14 have hired a superintendent, negotiated a
15 five-year teacher contract and managed the
16 financial affairs of the district with a 150
17 million dollar budget.

18 My background includes a degree in
19 political science from the University of Michigan
20 with an urban studies concentration and studies
21 at the University of Illinois graduate programs
22 in transportation planning.

23 I worked as a planner at both the
24 CTA and Metra. I even completed the bus driver

1 training and drove a CTA bus in service on
2 Ashland and Halsted.

3 At Metra I worked on station
4 improvement projects and probably made on-site
5 visits to 99 percent of the stations.

6 I was called by the DuPage
7 Chairman's office for an interview on the
8 afternoon of Thursday August 29th. An interview
9 was scheduled for September 17th. Imagine my
10 surprise when I read a news alert around 4:00
11 p.m. on Friday, the day after my interview was
12 scheduled, that the candidate for the DuPage
13 Metra Board member would be voted on by the
14 DuPage County Board at their September 10th
15 meeting, a week before my scheduled interview.

16 I called the Chairman's office and
17 was told they were about to call me to cancel my
18 interview.

19 There were, quote, "many
20 applicants." They were about to call me to
21 cancel my interview. There were quote "many
22 applicants," and the Chairman had selected a
23 candidate.

24 Unlike Kane and Cook county, there

1 was never a public call for applicants. Kane
2 County I believe has asked for applicants to
3 apply by today September 3rd and has promised to
4 publish a list of all applicants.

5 Interviewees will be selected by a
6 Kane County Board Committee. I may not have even
7 been selected for an interview if this method was
8 used in DuPage, but Kane and Cook Counties are
9 seeking transparency in their interview process
10 for their Metra Board replacement members. I
11 asked the Chairman to call me this morning, but
12 my call was not returned.

13 I am here today to ask you, as you
14 consider how transit is to run in this region, to
15 consider, for instance, making these positions
16 elected positions.

17 I would also like to add that you
18 might want to consider the lead of the
19 Metropolitan Transit Authority in the New York
20 City region.

21 Members there are appointed by a mix
22 of State and local officials; but for at least 20
23 years there is no salary attached to these posts,
24 only a transit pass.

1 By state statutes school board
2 members in Illinois may not receive compensation.
3 At the very least it creates the specific
4 requirements for both the qualifications
5 necessary and the process used to select all
6 transit board members.

7 I know that Mr. Fitzgerald is
8 originally from New York, so I am sure you
9 understand the importance of public transit as to
10 the economic well-being of an entire region.

11 I am from Detroit where commuter
12 rail service pieced together by Amtrak was
13 disbanded 30-odd years ago, and we all know what
14 has happened to Detroit.

15 For the good of our entire region,
16 please consider serious changes to how all of the
17 transit boards in Northeastern Illinois are
18 selected. It really matters. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Thank you very
20 much.

21 And the last person -- and I cannot
22 read the first name. I apologize. But the last
23 name is Powell.

24 MR. POWELL: Yes.

1 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: I apologize,
2 Mr. Powell. We will get you to the microphone.

3 MR. POWELL: Good afternoon, ladies and
4 gentlemen. My name is Jamal Powell, and
5 dovetailing on what representative Riley said, I
6 am a member of the riding public, and that is why
7 I came here because I am hearing all of this talk
8 about what agencies are to be restructured and
9 how this that and the other should go on.

10 But I am very concerned that those
11 of us who use PACE, Metra and CTA may be left out
12 in the cold, and I kind of agree with the lady
13 ahead of me.

14 I frankly think that any talk of
15 reform of the service boards should deal with the
16 issue of electing service boards.

17 I frankly think what should happen
18 is that the RTA board should be a 15 member
19 elected board based on region and population.

20 For example, the City of Chicago
21 should have four members from each geographical
22 part of the city. Suburban Cook should have four
23 members from each geographical region, two
24 members apiece from DuPage and Will Counties and

1 one member apiece elected from Kane, McHenry and
2 Lake.

3 And I frankly see the geographical
4 representatives should have the task of
5 recommending members through the service boards
6 with a two-thirds confirmation from the entire
7 RTA board, and this would do two things.

8 A, it will force accountability;
9 and, B, the riding public will have a chance to
10 have a say in their transit agencies, because
11 right now, you got County Chairman left and right
12 making all of these appointments; and political
13 agendas are being tacked and not the people's
14 agenda.

15 I frankly think that the elected RTA
16 board should also be elected nonpartisan, and I
17 also think that any requirements on transit board
18 members was the RTA or even the service board
19 members they should be required not only to serve
20 on the board but use the service of these 10
21 hours a month to see what is going on, because it
22 seems that in these debates the concerns of the
23 riders have gotten lost, and we have an
24 opportunity to improve this system. Let's do it

1 right. And I thank you for your time.

2 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Thank you very
3 much, Mr. Powell.

4 I have no other public comment cards
5 at this point, so I am assuming that there is no
6 additional public comment today.

7 MR. STATON: I have a comment.

8 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: You do have one.

9 MR. STATON: Secretary Schneider, members
10 of the committee, my name is Spencer Staton. I
11 live in the City of Chicago. I just have a few
12 comments for things you may consider. You are
13 engaged in some important tasks.

14 One goes to the issue of funding for
15 public transit. Apart from the overall level of
16 funding which is going to be necessary to run
17 when we are talking about literally more than a
18 billion dollars a year in operating three service
19 boards, the question is where is the money going
20 to come from.

21 Currently the two major sources are
22 fares and sales taxes, neither of which depends
23 on the person's income for how much it costs them
24 to pay it.

1 So when you look at the overall fare
2 structure, you may think about issues of taxation
3 and whether these are regressive or progressive
4 tax structures which support public transit in
5 the region.

6 Second of all, in terms of service,
7 as a rider and as a member of the public, let me
8 just say that service should never be held
9 hostage for getting more funding.

10 Riders should not have to wonder
11 whether service is going to be available from one
12 year to the next.

13 And then finally in terms of
14 governance, I hope you would recognize that most
15 of the current governance that we have for not
16 only the CTA but also RTA and the service boards
17 have been borne of failure in crisis.

18 These have not been forward thinking
19 and looking solutions, but rather ones that have
20 been borne of crisis and respond to specific
21 needs and specific names, as a group as a panel
22 that is entrusted with being visionary about how
23 we are going to go forward in public transit.

24 Look at governance as a way to think

1 about in a model world we would have, what we
2 reward in terms of what are the behaviors we want
3 to reward of the transit providers. We want to
4 reward efficient, fair comprehensive service.
5 That is all I have to say. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Thank you very
7 much.

8 With that I would just ask if any of
9 the members of the Task Force have any closing
10 comments that they would like to make before we
11 adjourn today's meeting.

12 [No Response.]

13 CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: Seeing none, then
14 we will stand adjourned.

15 We will be in contact with you in
16 the very near future, hopefully in the next
17 couple of people days as to which working group
18 you will be on and talking to the chair or
19 co-chair of those working groups about a task
20 schedule so that we can keep this process moving
21 forward. Thank you.

22 (WHEREUPON, the meeting was
23 adjourned at 2:07 p.m.)

24